

October 8, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Without agreement on any of the 13 Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2003 appropriations bills, Congress continues to fund federal departments and programs on a week-to-week basis. The current continuing resolution expires on Friday, October 11, and another one is expected to be adopted this week to continue spending through October 18.

The Congressional schedule remains very uncertain. A post-election lame duck session is increasingly likely. In addition to the spending bills, agreements have not been reached on the level of funding or the items to be included in a health financing package, which currently contains a number of County-supported Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) provisions reported to your Board in the October 2, 2002 Federal Legislative Update. Other significant bills also remain gridlocked, including legislation to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and to create a Department of Homeland Security.

Election Reform: Last week, House and Senate conferees reached agreement on an election reform bill (H.R. 3295). The House is expected to take up the measure this week after the final legislative language and conference report is released. Senate action will follow soon after, and the President is expected to sign the measure. According to a summary of the conference agreement, subject to available appropriations, the bill authorizes \$3.86 billion over four years in election reform funding, including:

- \$650 million in FFY 2003 for Title I grants of which \$325 million would be used to replace punch card and lever voting machines and an additional \$325 million would be available to improve election administration;

- \$3 billion over the next three years to assist states in training poll workers, educating voters, improving the administration of Federal elections, and meeting the bill's requirements;
- \$100 million in grants over the next three years to increase access to polling places for persons with disabilities; and
- \$120 million over the next four years for several small categorical pilot, research, protection and advocacy, and educational programs.

Funding is subject to available appropriations which must be included in annual appropriations bills, including for FFY 2003.

In addition to authorizing grants as outlined above, the bill also would impose a number of new requirements on states, including:

- States will be required to implement a uniform, centralized computerized statewide voter registration database.
- Each voting system must produce a permanent paper record with a manual audit capacity.
- Each voting system also provide alternative language accessibility pursuant to the Voting Rights Act.
- Each voter must be given an opportunity to check for and correct ballot errors in a private and independent manner.
- Each precinct would be required to have at least one voting machine that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- To reduce voter fraud, individuals registering to vote will be required to present a valid drivers license or provide the last four digits of their Social Security number, and first-time voters who registered by mail must provide identification when they vote.

Justice Department Authorization: As reported to your Board on October 2, 2002, House and Senate conferees reached an agreement on H.R. 2215, a bill reauthorizing Department of Justice operations. The conference report subsequently was adopted by both houses. The President is expected to sign it into law. The measure contains a

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number of provisions of County interest, including a reauthorization of the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program and a new juvenile offender block grant targeted to local jurisdictions responsible for administering the juvenile justice system.

Chick Hearn Post Office Bill (H.R. 5340): Yesterday, the House adopted by voice vote H.R. 5340, the bill honoring the late Francis Dayle "Chick" Hearn by renaming the post office located at 5805 White Oak Avenue in Encino, California in his memory.

We will continue to keep you advised of any new developments.

DEJ:GK
MAL:MT:lm

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 All Department Heads
 Legislative Strategist